

“Everything in me lies”

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ABSTRACT. In Sam Shepard's plays, America is full of traditional and mythical symbols. He uses these emblems in order to subvert their meanings and manifest the discrepancies between characters' living in the West and the realities they confront. In his play, *A Lie of the Mind*, Sam Shepard reflects on the traditional meanings of myth and the erasure of them in the postmodern societies. Furthermore, the postmodern universe in these three plays is bombarded with representation and distortions of reality, and hyperreality which make reality be masked and obscure. The characters enter in simulations of reality after accepting the fact that the true reality doesn't exist. As a matter of fact, myths are not real; they are simulations of the past myths. Media with its glamorous and captivating power is of the most influential mediums in constructing the hyper real.

1. INTRODUCTION

Shepard's plays show his reflection on the traditional meanings of myth and the erasure of them in the postmodern societies. Their nostalgic effect leads in creation of myth in a society where social cohesion has given its place to indeterminacy and doubt. However, he tries to subvert the idea of myth and depicts its contrast with reality. As a matter of fact, “His characters struggle, unsuccessfully” [1] to find some authentic meaning to their existence and finally they recognize that they have been misled, betrayed and destroyed. Modern American society is rootless, fragmentary and cold contrary to its past society and culture. Disintegration of American family in the postmodern world, in effect, is one of the recurrent themes in most of Shepard's plays.

Sam Shepard's *A Lie of the Mind* is an odd play which stands as a crucial work in his career, and “its ambitions and shortcomings shed important light on the plays that would follow in the 1990s” [2]. In this play “not quite realistic characters faced with an almost realistic situation” and in response, they create an alternate reality, a fantasy, a lie within their own minds that is so complex to differentiate what is real from what is illusion and false [3]. *A Lie of the Mind* delineates the psychological and emotional terrain of each member of two families and makes the reader question the truths of life. In this play, similar to his other plays, Shepard laments “the disappearing rural America” and mourns “the tragic decay of the myth of the self-sustaining, nature-bound, truly manly American” [4].

This epic drama is the story of two families joined by the marriage of their children, Jake and Beth. Jake's family consists of, his brother Frankie, his sister Sally, and mother Lorraine; Beth's family are her brother Mike, her father Baylor, and mother Meg, one matriarchal and the other patriarchal. As the play begins, Jake is calling his brother, Frankie, to tell him that he has beaten his wife, Beth, so severely that he thinks she is dead. Actually, she is alive but brain-damaged, and being tended to by her possessive brother, Mike. In the next step, Jake reveals the reason of this beating. He suspects Beth, who is an actress, of cheating on him with “some guy. I don't know. Some actor-jerk” [5]. He cries to Frankie, that he resents Beth working outside the home and having a job he doesn't like or understand. As Frankie attempts to defend Beth's choices that she was “just trying to do a good job,” Jake responds angrily: “That's no job! I've had jobs before. I know what a job is. A job is where you work. A job is where you don't have fun. You don't dick around tryin' to pretend you're somebody else. You work. Work is work!”, then Frankie describe it

as “a different kind of a job”. Jake answers: “It’s an excuse to fool around! That’s what it is. That’s why she wanted to become an actress in the first place. So she could get away from me” [5]. This speech at the same time reveals both Jake’s desire to control Beth and his fear of losing her [6]. In essence, he is suspicious of his wife and feels humiliated by being laughed at for trying to control her; it makes him more furious that “she took it so light” [5] when accused of cheating on him:

I knew she was getting' herself ready for him. I could tell. Got worse and worse. When I finally called her on it she denied it flat. I knew she was lying too. Could tell it right away. The way she took it so light. Tried to cast it off like it was nothin'. Then she starts tellin' me it's all in my head. Some imaginary deal I'd cooked up in my head. Had nothin' to do with her, she said. Made me try to believe I was crazy. She's all innocent and I'm crazy. So I told her - I told her - I laid it on the line to her.... And she laughs. Right to my face. She laughs. Kept puttin' 'em on. Every mornin'. Puttin' 'em back on. She says it's right for the part. Made her feel like the character she says. [5].

In fact, all these lead to Jake’s distrust of Beth, and raise his jealousy and anger for being made to feel a fool. Actually, as he says, he “saw enough to know somethin' was goin' on” [5]. Shepard indicates that there is no escape from the family: “I’m interested in the family’s biological connections and how those patterns of behavior are passed on. In a way it’s endless” [7]. This beating in the course of the play, will clarify long hidden and suppressed thoughts and feelings of members of the two families as they react to this event. Furthermore, by returning to their origin, their family, the roots and the past are revealed gradually. As Carol Rosen indicates:

A Lie of the Mind, then, charts a simple pilgrimage. The voyagers are a man who finds stillness, silhouetted by the moon in the snow, and a woman who finds a voice, and rejects the old truth, the old love, choosing instead the gentler Frankie. The voyage is characterized by the hopelessness of life without love, by the feeling of death that love’s absence brings, and by the yearning to invent new patterns, to escape the past. [8]

2. DISCUSSION

By the mid-1960s the term “Postmodernism” began to be widely and emphatically used by American cultural critics. This new trend, doubtful of the nature of truth and reality, has changed the notion of reality to something subjective and based on the situation a person lives in or the culture that embraces them. Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* elaborates on this debate:

I will use the term *modern* to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta discourse . . . making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth . . . I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives. [9]

This era is the state of disillusionment with “metanarratives”. In Lyotard’s view, “Metanarratives are total philosophies of history setting out the rules of narratives and language games, which establish ethical and political rules for the society” [10]. A crucial issue that has been taken into consideration by most critics is that, in the postmodern society there is no more individuality and the self is no more the united whole of the modern time, instead it is a constructed fragmented phenomenon which is in essence controlled by mass media images.

The crucial issue raised by Lyotard is that changes in society and culture in the second-half of the twentieth century have culminated in the loss of faith in the “grand narratives” –also known

as “master-discourses”, “super narratives” or “metanarratives”– of modernity. “Grand narratives” or universal “meta-narratives” as he proclaimed are total philosophies of history setting out the rules of narratives and language games, which establish ethical and political rules for the society. These metanarratives that traditionally used to give cultural paradigms, some forms of legitimation or authority, have “lost [their] credibility” [9] since the Second World War. Generally, the “grand narratives” refer to the great theories of history, science, religion and politics. As a matter of fact, one of Lyotard’s main arguments is the disapproval of the notion that everything is knowable by science or that as history moves forward in time, humanity makes progress.

Roland Barthes is another major postmodern critic whose ideas with regard to the aim of this study are to be brought under scrutiny. His *Mythologies* is a series of articles concerning the values and attitudes implicit in the variety of messages. He believes that culture with the aid of these messages barrages us: “advertisements, newspaper, and magazine reports, photographs, and even material objects like cars and children’s toys” [11]. He calls these messages myth. In writing about the process of mythologisation, Barthes refers to the tendency of socially constructed notions, narratives, and assumptions to become “naturalised” in the process, that is, taken unquestioningly as given within a particular culture. Taking into account all new cultural events as mythical, Roland Barthes is a noticeable figure in starting a revolution in myth studies and cultural studies. According to Barthes “myth is a system of communication, a message, a concept or an idea; on the whole, it is a mode of signification” [12].

French theorist Jean Baudrillard is of the leading critics of contemporary society and culture. In his major works of the 1970s, Jean Baudrillard maintained the disappearance of categories “of the subject, political economy, meaning, truth, the social, and the real in contemporary postmodern social formations” [13]. (In his vision, “Today, the world has become real beyond our wildest expectations. The real and the rational have been overturned by their very realization” [13].

Baudrillard in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, states that postmodern life is “fluctuating in indeterminacy” since “hyperreality” and “simulation” absorb reality. It is the “principle of simulation” and “models” [14], not that of reality, which control and determine social life. According to James Powell, “in hyper-realization, icons, images and copies which bear no resemblance to any reality rule and the simulation, the simulacrum and the copy become the real” [14].

It is this realm which Baudrillard names as hyperreality:

Hyper-reality, however, is technically, in Baudrillard’s terms, not a reality that exists to separate simulacrum from reality in the world. It is, in fact, a distraction from a real world which is in itself “unreal”. The hyper-real concept stems from Baudrillard’s questioning of what real is. The discussion in *Simulacra and Simulations* concludes by saying that what is believed to be reality is in itself a simulacrum of reality, a system of signs which point inwards towards themselves. The hyper-reality therefore, exists as unreal by disguising itself to being real. [15]

3. THE FALL OF GRAND NARRATIVES AND LOSING THE SENSE OF TIME

Of Shepard’s recurrent obsessions in his plays is “the postmodernist suspicion that the redemptive powers of modernism’s paradigms might in fact be fault” [10]. The Lyotardian breakdown of master narratives is seen in *A Lie of the Mind* as two master narratives, religion, here Christianity, as well as the Enlightenment seem to be shaky. The fall of religion in the family life is obvious. In Derridian terms he puts their social values “under erasure”. None of the characters of the play seem to have any moral inclination at all. Their attitude towards life reflects the postmodern condition in which the old grand narrative such as Christianity and morality has lost its place.

Concerning the Enlightenment, postmodern existence “is a continual process of trying to find meaning in the face of the knowledge that meaning is always relative and contingent” [16].

Lyotard believes that one traditional function of narrative is to legitimate knowledge and that all narratives, “even if they were received only yesterday must be suspected” [10]. Characters’ existence and non-existence in *A Lie of the Mind* would make no difference in the family who lost their American Dreams. The family members allegorize the postmodern condition, a time for the end of Enlightenment project. In this condition, there are no longer any myths or rituals to guide anyone; instead they have given their place to “little or local narratives” [9].

In *A Lie of the Mind*, Shepard desires to show the inability of America to deliver on its promises. He also desires to highlight the fact that the so-called American Dream proves nothing but a fantasy of confused minds. Sam Shepard himself once indicates:

What is the American Dream? Is it what Thomas Jefferson proposed? Was that the American dream? Was it what George Washington proposed? Was it what Lincoln proposed? Was it what Martin Luther King proposed? I don’t know what the American Dream is. I do know that it doesn’t work, Not only doesn’t it work, the myth of the American dream has created extraordinary havoc, and it’s going to be our demise [7].

What characters face is completely the opposite of what they had in their minds: a shattered family, drunkard fathers, bewildered mothers who do not recognize their son-in-laws and brother-in-laws. These traits do not match the standards of the traditional, moral, American family. Also, none of the family’s sons could be the true model of what American Dream supposes them to be, as all are impotent and irresponsible figures of a corrupted family. In this way, Shepard portrays a life which is completely the antithesis of American Dream. The ideal American kind of life is completely deconstructed in this play.

So far, we have, to some extent, obtained a general picture of the condition of these two families in the light of postmodern vision. A crucial issue that should be taken into consideration in this play is the critical outlook towards the representation of myths as Sam Shepard tries to subvert the idea of myth. In the first place, the myth of a good American family is deconstructed in *A Lie of the Mind*. In contrast to its past society and culture, modern American society is now rootless, defective and raw. Most of Shepard’s plays portray families in severe crisis and disintegration. The families of his plays are violent, cold, and unkind members who are spiritually and physically apart from each other. The common feature between them is their essential “estrangement” from each other [17]. Moreover, they seem to be out of touch with the world, as if stranded on an island in the middle of the icy landscape, frozen in time and space. They are disconnected with city, all its belongings or the reality behind the doors as Baylor says to Frankie: “You won’t get anywhere with that City stuff back here, boy. That don’t hold water in the in the back country. There’s not a lawyer within six hundred miles a’ this place.last lawyer who tried to come back in here, we cut his nuts off” [5].

Another issue which is the matter of importance in this article is the fact that in these two families, no one appears to remember the past in a good way. As an obvious example, the parents do not remember whether their children have been married or not. Moreover, Meg does not remember if she has been hospitalized or not, and makes the mistake of calling her husband Dad:

Meg: They locked me up once, didn’t they, Dad?

Baylor: That wasn’t you. That was your mother.

Meg: Oh.

Baylor: That was a long time ago, anyhow.

Meg: it wasn’t me? [5].

The memories of the past or the golden days are mentioned throughout the play, like when Lorraine is talking about the past days with Jake in the seventh scene of Act I. In her view, in those days there was no reason to tell lies: "That was back before things went to pieces" [5]. Jake is also eager to know about the past and how his father died as he asks Sally, his sister to stay along and tell him all about the past. In effect, there is no sense of time or any definite reference to the place.

For instance, once Beth tells her mother “good night” while Mark shouts “It’s not night! It’s daytime! Jesus Christ, can’t you see it’s daytime out there” [5]. According to Kane, in “*A Lie of the Mind* images of the past are not always tangible, or especially welcome, they are no less discernible, providing a critical dramatic and cinematic framework in family-themed plays that share the locus of the home” [18].

4. THE MYTH OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Shepard believes that everything can be traced back to the family: “What doesn’t have to do with family? There isn’t anything, you know what I mean? Even a love story has to do with family. Crime has to do with family. We all come out of each other - everyone is born out of a mother and a father, and you go on to be a father. It’s an endless cycle” [19]. As far as *A Lie of the Mind* investigates the role of the family, a dysfunctional family, in the formation of the fragmented identities of the members of families, it might be one of the greatest American family dramas. By separating Jake and Beth, Shepard makes them return to their families as the initial sources of trouble since they prove to be the improper sources of solace and affection. In *A Lie of the Mind*, Shepard is investigating the wounds that people bring down upon each other.

The characters leave home, though they desperately need home and shelter; they forget huge parts of their life in past even though the present is controlled by it; they are the loneliest ones despite the presence of those they love and care; they search for truth in “self-constructed lies” [17]. Ron Mottram has best introduced this play as “a play of disturbing contradiction” [17]. The stunning paradox is that the members of families are closely bound together but seem unavoidably destined for separation. The characters of this play are “as much prisoners of an unjust fate as was Oedipus, but since they live in a world shorn of the gods, their tragedy may be little more than absurdity. In their action they echo St. Paul’s lament, “The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” [17].

From the beginning of the play, the audience learns of Jake and Beth violent marriage and Jake’s aggressive behavior. He calls Frankie from a payphone and agitatedly recounts the beating he just inflicted upon Beth: “She’s not gonna pull outa this one, Frankie. She’s not gonna. I saw her face. It was bad this time. Real bad. [...] All red and black and blue” [5]. He repeatedly smashes the receiver down on the payphone due to his inability to control his rage while talking. Additionally, in scene 2 of act 2, Sally, Jake’s sister reacts to Jake’s news: “there was other times when you said you’d killed her-when you thought you’d kill her-remember?” [5]. Jake’s comments, his behavior and Sally’s reaction reveal the consistency of his violent impulses.

Mothers of the play, Meg and Lorraine, who are expected to be supportive, caring and affectionate, are surprisingly such inattentive to their children’s life that they don’t even remember the name of their son-in-law and daughter-in-law. Lorraine, for example, asks Jake’s sister, Sally, “Who’s Beth? . . . Never hear a’ her” [5]. She seems to be a non-responsible mother who does not want to accept the situation of her son and denies to have known anything about the reality of her son’s life. Moreover, in her belief, Jake is only pretending to be ill: “It’s all pretend. He just wants some attention, that’s all” [5]. Beth’s mother, Meg, is as confused in her recollections of Jake as Lorraine is of Beth. They reveal their postmodern displacement and their inability to place themselves in time by asking continually “who?” or “what?” When Meg is informed by Mike that Jake inflicted the brain damage on Beth, his name seems to mean nothing to her: “Meg: Who’s Jake? Mike: Her husband, Mom. Jake . . . You remember Jake, don’t ya?” [5].

When Jake returns home, due to his abnormal behaviors, Sally threatens her mom that she will leave the house if he stays here. In response, Lorraine so coolly answers: “then leave, girl. This is my boy here” [5]. Besides, when Jake asks Lorraine: “Where’d she go?” she replies indifferently: “she left. I don’t know where. Just pack up and left. Probably just as well” [5]. Even though Lorraine seems to hold the control of the house, she is not able to act as a proper support for her children. Shepard destroys the image of a good mother by presenting Meg and Lorraine. They

are not acceptable as mother figures as far as their presence and attitude at home are not like real mothers. Charles G. Whiting describes mothers of Shepard's plays:

It is this abandonment and the tragic loss of married life which is at the root of the very negative image of older women in Shepard's theatre. They have all reacted by detaching themselves in one way or another from reality. Meg encourages Beth's unrealistic plan to marry Jake's brother, Frankie. Lorraine treats Jake as if he is still young boy, even trying to play "helicopter" with him when she attempts to feed him her cream of broccoli soup. [20]

The mothers' weakness, passivity and illusory state are evident in the course of Shepard's plays from his earlier plays, *Rock Garden*, to his latest *A Lie of the Mind*. As Auerbach states: "Sam Shepard has created a series of mother figures that are too weak to counteract the violence of the fathers. They lack the will and the power to restore order in their world, to bring about a family in balance, one that can nurture its children" [21]. Thus, the myth of the nurturing mother is another myth that is shattered by Shepard in this play. The myth of a good, affectionate mother has vanished in the history of America. It does not mean that there is no loving mother in the postmodern society; rather it means that metanarratives of American dream concerning the matriarch or the mother figure do not exist in this context.

Accordingly, besides Jake and Beth issues, each family has different problems and traumas. Postmodernity brings gap and disconnection between them and they even do not understand each other. The myth of a good American family exists no more. Shepard is introducing a new one which is in contrast to what the old myths of America depict. In Beth's family, the same as most Shepard's fathers, Baylor dominates Meg and Beth, treating them with indifference, cruelty and contempt "based on his desire to be free of obligations" [17]. In the first Act of scene 6, the audience will be surprised by Baylor's absence in Beth's wedding as he "was fishin'" [5]. In another significant scene, when Meg and Baylor come to the hospital to visit Beth, Mike tell them that "she's sleeping", Baylor responds viciously: "Well, wake her up. We drove all the way down here Billings just to see her. Now wake her up" [5]. Speaking in aphasic tongues, Beth delivers some of the most heartbreaking lines to Frankie about his father:

(*Very simple to Frankie*) This--is my father. He's given up on love. Love is dead for him. My mother is dead for him. Things live for him to be killed. Only death counts for him. Nothing else. This--This--(*She moves slowly to Frankie.*) This is me. This is me now. The way I am. Now. This. All. Different. I--I live inside this. Remember. Remembering. You. You--were one. I know you. I know--love. I know what love is. I can never forget. That. Never. [5]

In the second scene of Act 3, Meg argues with Baylor over his coldness and indifference to family: "You think it's me, don't you?...You think your whole life went sour because of me. Because of mother, because of Beth. If only your life was free of females, then you'd be free yourself" [5]. Or in another scene she reveals her awareness about her husband's feeling when she says:

The problem is that 'the female one needs – the other' while 'the male one – doesn't really need the other. Not the same way . . . The male one goes off by himself. Leaves. He needs something else. But he doesn't know what it is. He doesn't really know what he needs. So he ends up dead. By himself. [5]

Jake's father left his family long ago and died in Mexico. This desire to leave has preoccupied Lorraine's mind as she asks: "Is there any reason in this Christless world why men

leave women?" [5]. Nonetheless, he seems to be not a kind father during his presence as the conversations between the remaining members of the family reveal it:

Jake: (*normal voice now*) You're afraid a' me, aren't ya? (*pause*) aren't ya?

Sally: I'm not afraid of you.

Jake: Yeah, you are.

Sally: Only because you remind me of dad sometimes. [5]

As a matter of fact, the fathers of families "do not know how to fulfill their roles, [they] have lost their place in society and the world: alcoholics, desperate fathers, maniacs, and good-for-nothings, aimlessly wandering about the Pampa rather than purposefully settling and cultivating the continent" [22]. As Auerbach indicates, most father figures in Sam Shepards' plays, like his own father, prefer to vanish in the desert in a desperate search for origin and identity. By all means, they are all doomed to failure, thus turning into absent figures, or ashes, similar to Jake's father [21].

Furthermore, the hidden truth which is unraveled in Jake's family during the course of the play is the cause of the father's death. Jack explains that his father was deeply drunk and rushed into the street and was hit by a car, but it is not true. Sally promised to hide the truth for the sake of his brother but finally recounts that Jake was drunk with his father just before this accident and he challenged his father to a drinking match. This provocation resulted in his father's death, so this is Jake's indirect killing of his father. It is in this conflict that the reader realizes that Lorraine has been suspicious all along about the truth of her husband's death. All this time Sally has been covering up for Jake as he is unable to admit his own guilt. So, this is a climactic moment for Sally as she overcomes her fears and removes her lies by telling her mother the reality, forcing Lorraine to see what her life and their lives, have been and making her to realize that both her husband and Jake were "hopeless men" and there's "nothing you can do about the hopeless" [22].

Autonomy is of common and popular traits of men in every culture. However, according to Mohammad Hosseini-Maasoum, in Shepard's male characters, this feature "appears as an illusion" [23]. They try to affirm their masculine autonomies and support their actions and decisions by becoming "violent and isolated" [23]. In contrast to what characteristics a father, a husband, a son or even a brother are supposed to possess, most of them are clinging to the negative aspects of manliness such as being violent, irresponsible, and alcoholic. Carla J. McDonough states that "Shepard shows how ideas of men destroy his characters and what they think of "masculinity is just an illusion, lie, and fantasy" [24]. She puts in:

The masculinity which they embrace is always (self-) destructive. As we see, male characters in Shepard's plays try to show their consciousness of self-defense somehow because they have some anxiety about their own existence or their identity. They stick to the traditional patriarch system, but it doesn't work well and becomes functionless thing because of the change of the times. [24]

On the whole, these two families represent the dysfunctional and ineffectual ones which are not able to satisfy the basic needs of their members. Sally's statement will best explain the condition of most family in postmodern life: "I started thinkin' about this whole thing. This family. How every thing's kina- shattered now" [24]. Consequently, tired of this chaos, each of them creates an imaginary world to fulfill their desires.

5. HYPERREALITY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO FORGET THE HARSH REALITY

The unbearable situations and the exhaustion of individuals culminate in the character's attempt to seek refuge. Consciously or unconsciously, they create a new and imaginary world out of the real world. In Barthes' vision, this hyper real itself is an imposing option by the dominant force, "Bourgeois". In truth, hyperreality offers a desirable imaginary world. Beth, a woman who is suffering from the violence and unhappy marriage, finds the world of theatre as a consoling resort; this job provides her the opportunity of leaping from the world of reality into the world of

illusion and help her to “construct a separate reality by playing roles” [25]. According to Carla J. McDonough:

Jake's assumption that Beth's performance is a reflection of her actual behavior evokes the metaphor of the theater and the role playing that takes place there which is a common aspect of many of Shepard's plays. This metaphor of the theater is given a particularly vicious realization in Beth's acting career. [24]

She was so involved with and fascinated by her role, a loose woman in a local theatrical performance that Jake cannot distinguish between the pretense and the reality. A careful observation of the conversation between Jake and his brother will clarify the condition and the attitudes of Jake and Beth. Here Jake recounts the times he helps Beth to memorize her dialogues for her play:

JAKE: Then she starts readin' the lines with me, at night. In bed. Readin' the lines. I'm helpin' her out, right? Helpin' her memorise the damn lines so she can run off every morning and say 'em to some other guy. Day after day. Same lines. And these lines are all about how she's bound and determined to get this guy back in the sack with her after all these years he's been ignoring her. How she still loves him even though he hates her. How she's saving her body up for him and him only.

FRANKIE: Well, it was just a play, wasn't it?

JAKE: Yeah, a play. That's right. Just a play. "Pretend." That's what she [Beth] said. "Just pretend." I know what they were doing! . I know what that acting shit is all about. They try to "believe" they're the person. Right? Try to believe so hard they're the person that they actually think they become the person. So you know what that means don't ya?

FRANKIE: What?

JAKE: They start doin' all the same stuff the person does!... They start acting that way in real life. Just like the character.... [5]

In this scene, while Jake looks at Beth when getting ready to go to the rehearsal and dresses up, he comes to believe that she cheats on him with her stage partner. As a matter of fact, he confuses the fictional world on the stage and the real world, and sees the love affair on the stage as the real one. As a result, he hits his wife into unconsciousness out of jealousy. In Morimotos terms, “The performance, the ‘pretending’, is the gesture that connects the real world with the fictional world” [26].

In scene 3 of Act 1, Jake’s speech about Beth’s behaviors reveals more about her obsession: “I’d watch her oiling herself while I pretended to be asleep. She was in a dream, the way she did it. Like she was imagining someone else touching her. Not me. Never me. Someone else” [5]. Then for Jake, his motive for beating Beth seems “no longer to be fantasy but fact” [24]. He is not "paranoid" that his wife becomes the adulteress, but he has a form of proof that she is cheating on him, that is “his internal visions” [24]. In other words, the playing role is blended with the real life, and the lines between reality and fiction are blurred. In accordance with this state, Baudrillard indicates that “*reality itself is hyperrealistic*”:

The secret of surrealism was that the most banal reality could become surreal, but only at privileged moments, which still derived from art and the imaginary. Now the whole of everyday political, social, historical, economic reality is incorporated into the simulative dimension of hyperrealism; we already live out the "aesthetic" hallucination of reality. The old saying, "reality is stranger than fiction," which belonged to the surrealist phase of the aestheticization of life, has been surpassed. [14]

Here the significant issue is the role of the media. In Baudrillard's opinion, the media force the public to think, feel and react as the media wants by distorting reality. In plain English, the media constructs a sense of hyperreality to "homogenize" or manipulate the mass audiences [27]. Postmodern life is "fluctuating in indeterminacy" since "hyperreality" and "simulation" absorbs reality. In this condition, it is the "principle of simulation" and "models" not that of reality, which control and determine social life [14]. In hyper-realization, icons, images and copies which "bear no resemblance to any reality" rule and the "simulation, the simulacrum and the copy become the real" [28]. Respectively, Beth seeks to create a world for herself by escaping to take role in play. She has told Jake that "this is the real world" [5]. Jake's statement, "This acting shit is more real than the real world for her" [5] is in exact accordance with Baudrillard's definition of Hyperreality which is "more real than real" [29]. The media produces a sense of hyperreality to influence the mass audience and make them satisfy themselves with what hyperreal world provides for them. In this way, she leaves the world of reality and enters the world of unreality and dreams. Jake tries to control and beats her due to his inability to be included in her world.

Now, Beth, a battered wife with brained damage, suffers from aphasia and partial amnesia "which create a typically Shepardesque states of critical consciousness" [30]. Hence, having been mesmerized by the world of hyperreality, reminding Baudrillard's Disneyland, Beth again is trying to take refuge, this time in a romanticized version of love even after the beating and losing part of her memory. She identifies Baylor's shirt as a costume and presents herself as a man by wearing the shirt. She says to Frankie: "look how big a man is. So big. He scares himself. His shirt scares him. he puts his scary shirt on so he won't scare himself. He can't see when it on him. Now he thinks it's him [5]. Then she proposes marrying Frankie, who travels to Montana at Jake's insistence to inquire about Beth's condition:

Beth Pretend. Because it fills me. Pretending fills. Not empty. Other. Ordinary. Is no good. Empty Ordinary is empty. Now, I'm like the man. (*Pumps her chest up, closes her fits, sticks her chin out and struts in the shirt.*) Just feel like the man. Shirt brings me a man. I am a shirt man. Can you [Frankie] see? Like Father. You can see? Like brother.... Pretend to be. Like you. Between us we can make a life. You could be the woman. You be.... You could pretend to be in love with me. With my shirt. You love my shirt. This shirt is a man to you. You are my beautiful woman. You lie down. [5]

By a "lie of her mind" she replaces Jake with Frankie and asks Frankie to pretend to be Jake, but with a different behavior: "But soft with me. Gentle. Like a woman-man." She wants him to be better, "better man. Maybe. Without hate....you could pretend so much that you start thinking this is me. You could really fall in love with me....Us. In a love we never know" [5]. She imposes on Frankie a fantasy version of a man she desires as her new and better husband and tell him her ever desire: "Once we're together, the whole world will change. We'll be in a whole new world" [5]. Frankie is not purely male and is "soft" and "[g]entle. Like a woman-man" [5], and also he becomes the victim of Beth's fantasies. Surprisingly, Meg also so caught up by this romantic decision and wedding in "the high meadow . . . Just like the old times" [5] that she continues talking while seems to forget Beth's prior marriage to Jake:

Meg: Maybe we could have the wedding here, Baylor. That would be nice, wouldn't it? Soon as the weather thaws.

Frankie: (to Meg) she's married to my brother! She's already married! You were there at the wedding. Don't you remember?

.....
Meg: I think it would be wonderful up on the high meadow. We could invite the whole family. We could even have a picnic up there. Cake and lemonade. We could have music. We haven't had a real wedding in so long. [5]

Finding a better situation in the world of the play, they consciously accept an unreal situation as more real than any reality. The world of dream in which one's aspirations come true is a world of unreality or illusion. The characters step out of the world of reality and join the world of unreality and dreams. This hiding of truth makes characters and the audience enters a world of reality in which no base or origin roots at its background, that is, hyperreality. In this world, undesirable things such as life empty of affection and full of fear is replaced by desirable one, a new and romantic life. But unable to trust in his imagination and make the leap, Frankie wants to leave and immediately backs away.

Another significant issue concerning Beth is the fact that during the play her head is covered with the bandage due to her head injury and her brain operation in the hospital, but when she takes off the bandages, there appears to be no scar on her head. This is described in the stage direction, "She [Beth] bends her head forward and pulls the hair up on the back of her neck to show Frankie a nonexistent scar" [5]. Or as Frankie indicates: "There's nothing here. There's no scar here" [5]. This incoherence raise doubts about whether Jake really hit Beth and injured her or not. The important thing is that she completely believes in its existence and doesn't hesitate to show her head. Unconsciously, she may fall into a situation to "pretend" to be a patient. In this way, "the stories of the characters in the play have no credibility" [26].

DeRose believes that this crisis, her partial loss of speech and memory, becomes "an opportunity for perceptual rebirth as she recreates herself, her world, and the language which gives meaning to that world, without the enforced preconceptions of experience and education" [30]. According to Lyotard, if we have rejected grand narratives, then what we have fallen back on are little narratives. Little narratives are Wittgenstein's "language games", limited contexts in which there are clear, if not clearly defined, rules for understanding and behavior. We no longer give credence to total philosophical contexts like Marxism which ostensibly would prescribe behavior in all aspects of life; rather, we have lots of smaller contexts which we act within [9]. Therefore, Beth tries to subvert logos and create another language. As Jane Ann Crum indicates, "to understand Beth one must listen carefully as if hearing another meaning" [31].

In Bennet's opinion, the unique and positive point about Beth is her reconstructing identity and affirming her present self. The gradual regaining of memory does not make her return to the earlier self: "Beth chooses not to repeat any of the wife/mother roles—her own, her mother's or Lorraine's" [32]. Her words show her difference among Shepard's earlier characters: "This is me. This is me now. The way I am. Now. This. All. Different. I—I live inside this. Remember. Remembering. . . ." [5]

Other characters also seek refuge to different myths which are not totally real and are built up by the "bourgeoisie" in its various manifestations. Roland Barthes believes that though we are not fully aware of it, modern myths are not made without a reason. As in the example of the red wine and the picture of a saluting soldier, mythologies are created to carry on an idea of society that adheres to the current ideologies of the "ruling class" and its "media" [12]. As Sandra Wynands indicates Shepard uses "popular American myth in an ironic, yet reassertive way" [22]. And this position "as ironic critic gives him a legitimacy when he uses the elements he ironizes in an implicitly affirmative fashion, because his awareness of their problematic nature puts his critique beyond criticism. As a result, the myths emerge with confirmed authority" [22].

6. NATIONAL MYTHS

In *A Lie of the Mind*, Shepard explored "the American family and in so doing exposed deep-rooted aspects of the national character" [2]. Jake is one of the characters who is represented as an American character by American national symbol, the flag, toward the middle of the play. As the play progresses, the flag becomes a major focus of attention for both the audience and characters. When Jake comes back home, his sister, Sally finds the flag which was given to him after his father's death, "folded in a triangle military-style" underneath Jake's childhood bed along with their father's war medals and father's World War II leather flight-jacket [5].

In an ironic scene, he leaves the house to see Beth while “*He is in boxer shorts underwear, sleeveless t-shirt under his father leather pilot’s jacket. The jacket is covered with all medals from the cardboard box now. He wears the American flag from his dad’s funeral draped around his neck*” [5]. “The medals” on his father’s World War Two flight jacket and “the flag” represent the glory of America and its myth but “ignore the dark undercurrent that appears in its citizens” [33]. Jake’s first comment about the flag is the word “Dusty” which shows “the state of an American identity that seems outdated and inaccessible to society” [33]. However Jake’s reverence for the flag soon becomes apparent, as he wears it around his neck like a cape [33].

Mike, Beth’s brother, tracks Jake down to revenge his sister’s condition. He leads the submissive Jake onto the stage on his hands and knees and forces him to go to Beth in order to apologize. The significant point about Jack in this scene is the American flag in his mouth which looks like a horse’s bit, while Mike is holding on to the ends of the flag like reins. Jake’s status is lowered to the point that Mike treats him like a farm animal by addressing him with such language: “Atta boy. You’re gonna do just fine. Pretty soon we can take you right out into the woods. Drag some timber. You’ll like that” [5]. According to Paul Seamus Madachy, this scene “illustrates the restricting and debilitating effect of American identity on its citizens” [33]. It connotes the fact that America in order to “promote and enforce a distinct national character” and create an imaginary and dreamlike world of myth, breaks its citizens much like a farmer uses a hackamore to break his horse [33].

By using Old Glory, the American flag, Mike intends to govern and restrain Jake. As far as this flag symbolizes the nation and its ideologies, Mike’s action emphasizes the impact of American identity on the American. Graham believes, “the flag has become, not a mythic emblem of liberty, but a means of oppression” [33]. Hence, in this world of “incredulity toward meta-narratives” [9], in America, the capitalist system, embodies in Hollywood and other powerful legislators, delineates the past values of the Old West in the form of myths and rituals that related to the world of fantasy and hyperreality than to the real world of the past.

Media plays an outstanding role in making the hyper real world. It lures the spectators’ mind toward media’s tendencies and with its fascinating power provides a bewitching context for them in order to fulfill their dreams and enjoy the fake reality. Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* supports this statement when he speaks about the operation of myth in society. Though his focus is on France and the dominant force, the bourgeoisie, in this country, his ideas can be extended to Western society or perhaps other countries around the world. Barthes sees the bourgeois power and influence to be so widespread as to “ex-nominate” itself [12]. He states that “bourgeois ideology can therefore spread over everything and in doing so lose its name without risk” [12]. Bourgeois ideology, in other words, becomes universal and myth is the one which robs images of their historicity in order to make them to preserve the dominant bourgeois culture and conserve bourgeois culture and their figures as somehow eternal, inevitable and not to be challenged. In Paul Seamus Madachy’s vision, the use of Old Glory in *A Lie of the Mind* implicates:

America as being responsible for denying Americans the ability to achieve any sense of identity, national or individual, because it promotes an idealized vision of the pioneering, self-sufficient spirit while suppressing the violent reality of that image in our nation’s past. In this respect, *Lie* encapsulates the entire scope of American identity for Shepard: Americans are drawn to a vision of national identity; it restrains and ultimately destroys the individual, promoting an unattainable image of “the American”; and finally *Lie* attempts to salvage Old Glory, holding out the possibility that the flag (and American identity) play an important and potentially redemptive role in society. [33]

Another highly imagistic scene is when Mike wraps the flag around his hunting rifle and this suggests the inherent violence that permeates national consciousness. By concealing violence under the flag, Shepard challenges the idea of “providing a patriotic/nationalistic cover for the violence”.

In reality, wrapping the gun in “the American flag exposes the deceptive nature of an American identity that conceals its objectionable qualities” [33]. However, in some critics’ opinion, *A Lie of the Mind* leaves open the possibility of redemption for American identity, expressed through the flag-folding ritual between Baylor and Meg indicates “a desire for reconciliation, without credible dramatization” [2].

Noticing Mike’s use of the national flag as a gun cover, his father Baylor rages against his action. Baylor points out that Mike uses it as if it were “a grease rug” [5]. While Mike tries to point out that “it’s just a flag” and the essential thing is that he has captured “the guy who beat up your daughter” [5], his father’s attention is only toward the Old Glory. Then he continues: “My sister can get her brains knock out and it doesn’t make a goddamn bit a’ difference to anyone in this family! all you care about is a flag?” [5]. One can observe in the following conversation, the generation gap between Baylor and Mike in the treatment of the national flag:

BAYLOR What're you doin' with that rifle? What's that wrapped around it?

MIKE. It's just a flag. He [Jake] had it on him. He had it all wrapped around him. I wanted Beth to come out so he could —

BAYLOR. *(Pause. Taking a step toward MIKE, kicking blanket away)* It's not just a flag. That's the flag of our nation. Isn't that the flag of our nation wrapped around that rifle? [5].

From this quotation, it can be deduced that Baylor's generation shows respect for the national flag, whereas the younger men do not. Baylor also says, “What do ya [Mike] think yer doin', using the American flag like a grease rug” [5]. Baylor then says, “It's the same color it always was. They haven't changed it, have they? Maybe added a star or two but otherwise it's exactly the same” [5]. Once he has recovered the flag, Baylor continues to treat it with an awed reverence. He concentrates on folding the national flag in a traditional way with his wife and admonishes her, “Don’t let it touch the ground now. Just back away from me and we’ll stretch it out first. Don’t let it touch the ground whatever you do” [5]. This scene is reminiscent of the conflict between The Colonel and Stubbs in *States of Shock*. Baylor, the same as Colonel, stands as the patriotic military man who supports the national values and respects them. By the way, he is, in truth, infatuated by theses myths and the hyperreality which is imposed on American people. As we see in both *States of Shock* and *A Lie of the mind* the older generation of Baylor and Colonel who sticks to the old-fashioned dominant ideas and declares the authority of the national flag loses its prestige. However, by the end of *A Lie of the mind*, the flag has become almost sacrosanct, perhaps suggesting that its mythic value can somehow be recovered. This reinforces “the fetishism of Baylor's generation about the national flag. This links to their risky belief in American power” [26].

7. THE MYTH OF COWBOY AND WILD WEST

Sam Shepard’s obsession with cowboys and their desire to escape to Land is another recurrent American myth in *A Lie of the Mind*. Robert Coe cites Shepard’s deep admiration “for real cowboys—he thinks it’s a more authentic way of life” [34]. He has respect and interest for cowboys and their principles such as ruggedness, pioneering spirit and strong connections to the land and this partly explains the mythic treatment of the West in many of his plays [33]. In 1980s, after the election of Ragan, “national identity was being substituted by national pure American identity while a prevailing sense of ‘nostalgia’ for this sort of American identity, ‘the frontier, cowboys’ was dominant” [2]. The American people in Shepard’s works cannot ever achieve the fundamental characteristics that constitute his perception of “the American”, especially their strong attachment to the land. Madachy signifies that:

Shepard’s American is often entirely separated from any form of achievable American identity, unable to obtain a sense of self that corresponds to the principles

that he associates with the nation itself. Yet he is also unable to dissociate himself from that national character and find a sense of identity outside his status as an American. [33]

Caria J. McDonough interprets the inclination of men in Shepard's plays to the West, to the masculinized frontier, as a source to find the macho image they look for all their life; however, these men also drawn forward in their quest by the image of woman, which they "perceive as an extension or embodiment of that frontier to be conquered" [24]. McDonough, in "The Politics of Stage Space: Women and Male Identity in Sam Shepard's Family Plays" proclaims some views on Shepard's landscape in gendered terms. In accordance with her vision, Annette Kolodny indicates that "the virgin land of the frontier is metaphorically presented as a woman that must be possessed or tamed and which in turn will give the possessor his manhood" [24].

As Busby notes, "Shepard's plays demonstrate over and over the two sides of the American myth: the hope and promise of the dream of regeneration on the American frontier and the recognition that the dream has often been violent and destructive, that it appears as a 'lie of the mind' continuing to entrap and destroy" [35]. As a matter of fact, these hopes and dreams are valuable for Americans and Shepard almost agree as he posits: "[M]yth not only connects you and me to our personal families, it connects us to the family of generations and generations of races and people, tribes, the mythology of ancient people". [19]

As pointed out before, Chris Westgate in his essay analyses Shepard's plays in the light of Frederick Jackson Turner who believes that "the frontier, even if mediated by more than a century of urbanization, cultivates the individuality, self-reliance, and morality that are essential to the 'American character'" (45). Westgate indicates that Shepard in his plays merges with the frontier, away from populous cities, with the journey, with America. "And in so doing, he undergoes a distinctly American blend of epiphany, metamorphosis, and transcendence. Or, at least, the largely uncritical response to Shepard's fascination with the American West is maintained" [35].

Consequently, the characters dissatisfaction with their condition in life directs them to try to get away from their distress and attempt to escape and achieve a semblance of American identity which Shepard states as ultimately unrealizable. This attitude is obvious in especially male characters as Lorraine says: "Man runs off. Into the night. No word. No phone. Disappear like an apparition and I'm supposed to go track his ass down" [5]. Jake's father and Beth's father are the noticeable examples; the first one leaves the family and died a drunk in the middle of a road in Mexico and the second one stays with his family but has the desire to depart. Baylor's obsession with hunting and staying out is apparent throughout the story. According to Meg:

He's been out there all night again. I just don't understand how he can take the cold like that. Sometimes I think he'd rather live out there in that hunting shack year-round. He's got everything he needs out there. His magazine. His flashlight. His radio. He even eats his meals out there, anymore I don't know when all that started. [5]

Meg further indicates: "sometimes I think he's hiding from us" [5]. The desert is, in fact, a place where fathers disappear and as Ron Mottram states, it "recurs repeatedly in [Shepard's] plays as a setting for the action and as a refuge for the absent father no longer able to live with his family, who at the extreme is alienated from all normal social contact" [17]. In accordance with this statement, Sarah A. Dyne believes that fathers escape to this place since "they are too emotionally damaged by the trauma of war (both actual and internal)" and they are not able "to function within the domesticated sphere of the family unit" [36]. Meg addresses Baylor and complains about his constant leaving out:

Maybe you just wanna be alone. Maybe that's it. Maybe it's got nothing to do with hunting. You just don't want to be part of us anymore... Well, I mean we're living in the modern world. We've got the grocery stores just four miles down the road. We don't need to kill animals anymore to stay alive. We're not pioneers. [5]

Although Baylor stays with his family, he uncovers his basic feeling of entrapment and his desire for a life in “some mythical Eden in the wilderness”: “I could be up in the wild country huntin’ Antelope. I could be raising a string a’ pack mules back up in there. Doin’ somethin’ useful. But no, I gotta’ play a nursemaid to a bunch a’ feeble-minded women down here in civilization” [5]. Baylor is “another personification of the frontier mindset” who shows an unusual and obsessive reverence for the flag [33]. He imagines that the desert is a place where he can operate outside of the demands of society. However, this desert or “West” that he wishes to inhabit is always just beyond his reach. Shepard’s characters believe they can reconnect with the land and with themselves, finding the identity that they have lost. But whatever the desired destination, the illusion of American identity they cling to is ultimately unachievable because, according to Shepard’s plays, this place (and the identity it embodies) no longer exists, if in fact it ever did. Lorraine’s husband left his family long ago and lived alone in a trailer in Mexico until he pathetically died. According to Ron Mottram “in the case of the men who do, flight usually leads to an alienation no less engulfing than the one experienced at home” [17].

8. CONCLUSION

In *A Lie of the Mind*, one can feel “an exhaustion of the American soul produced by an internecine battle among those who should most love each other and yet, for almost inexplicable reasons, seem least capable of doing so” [17]. Shepard has demonstrated a culture that has run out of places to go and must now investigate itself to find a cure for its dissatisfaction. As far as “the frontier of irresponsibility is no longer available as an escape”, running off to the wilderness leads only to death, “as does a blind lashing out at the constraints imposed by close interaction with other people” [17]. The same as *A Lie of the Mind*, “everything that Shepard has been doing in his writing for the past decade has led up to this profoundly unsettling description of the American condition” [17]. In this play, one can notice the exhaustion of myth and its immediate consequences. The play suggests that the erosion of myth “entails the attenuation of community” [37] and this is represented through the disintegration of families and through the isolation of the different family units.

After beating Beth, Jake witnesses “series of images of Beth in his mind, all of them sensual and more real than anything he experiences with his body” [8]. At the end of Act one, he stares right through his sister, seeing instead a woman in his mind and says: “You never did see me, did ya, Beth?...Just had a big wild notion about some dream life up ahead. Somebody who was gonna save yer ass.” [5]. As Carol Rosen indicates in “Sam Shepard, Feminist Playwright: The Destination of *A Lie of the Mind*”, these visions are a kind of haunting—“a lie of the mind” that is, paradoxically, the essence of love as fire, consumed by its own bed of ashes” (32). Then he begins a journey “across a no-man’s-land toward his personal landscape of redemption: a vision—a lie—in his mind of Beth, the wife he has abused beyond recognition, a beaten, broken, healing woman” [8].

In the final scene, Beth meets Jake and he seems to be able to see the truth behind all the lies: “These things—in my head—lie to me. Everything lies. Tells me a story. Everything in me lies. But you. You stay. You are true. I know you now. You are true. I love you more than this life” [5]. However, Beth doesn’t leave her imaginary world as she “embraces Frankie and lays her head on his chest” [5]. All in all, though Beth evoked praises from critics due to finding a new kind of voice and also “it is a voice which refutes the assumption of a homogeneous audience which holds a male gaze” [32], in the light of the present study she is, as a matter of fact, fooled by “the lie of her own mind” [25]. By the aid of fantasy and imagination, she’s blending her past and present identities, as the young woman we see now is both actress and adolescent [25]. In other words, the character’s identities or reality are not fixed or stable. As Baudrillard states in *Simulation*, these identities are only “generated without any origin or reality” in hyperreality [38]. Therefore, this world of multiple identities, role-playings and signifier/signified relations, make the audience or even the characters be suspicious and doubtful about their real identifications. Another couple of the play, Meg and Baylor fall in to a newfound tenderness. Baylor asks Meg to come upstairs to bed, and when she says “I’ll be up in a while,” he replies, “Well, I’m goin’ up. You shut the lights

when you come. And don't dawdle. I don't wanna get woke up in the middle of a good dream" [5]. Such requests "indicate that Baylor has actually changed very little, and that he remains as self-absorbed as before" [33].

Although the play's ending is a far cry from a happy, in a radically aggressive and courageous move Sally and Lorraine vacate and destroy the father's house. The men of their life, husband and father, sons and brothers, do not exist anymore. Their only remnant is the house. By overcoming this, Sally and Lorraine are able "to see through their own lies and deceit" [3] as Lorraine does not desire to hold the photo related to her past and utters, "what do I wanna save it for? It's all in the past. Dead and gone" [5]. Kane believes that in Shepards' plays, specifically in *A Lie of the Mind*, the past does not obliterate itself, but it rather "remembers itself" mostly through photographs [18]. Carla J. McDonough who in "The Politics of Stage Space: Women and Male Identity in Sam Shepard's Family Plays" analyzes the play in feministic light consider the scene of fire in the snow a brief moment devoted to woman's sign:

Shepard's women also choose life over death, hope over despair, re-creation over destruction. If the patterns of behavior to which the men in Shepard's plays cling are what have brought his world—his vision of America—to death and destruction, it seems that an abandonment of such mythos and an invention of new is the only hope for survival. [24]

Apparently they succeed in leaving the hyperreality which they were trapped in and breaking their delusion and begin their journey to another continent, to Sligo, a country near Connaught, "a place remembered fondly by a maternal grandmother, a place where the mere mention of Lorraine's maiden name will provide them with safe harbor on a green isle surrounded by the waters of the Atlantic" [31]. Lorraine narrates a metaphorical nostalgia for the past:

. . . You know what I miss more than anything now?" Sally: What? Lorraine: The wind. One a' them fierce, hot, dry winds that come from deep out in the desert and rip the trees apart. You know, those winds that wipe everything clean and leave the sky without a cloud. Pure ble. Pure, pure blue. Wouldn't that be nice? [5].

This place might be like the land where men of the play escape in the hope of a change. The promised land which turns to be a hyperreality. As she faced with the truth of his son's violence towards his father, Lorraine tries to erase the past totally so that she can begin all a new life: "Lorraine, typically American in upping stakes and starting anew, resolves to make a clean sweep, ironically hoping she will find release from the past and from the reality of her son's brutality by retracing her ancestral roots in Ireland" [18]. By seeing Lorraine's fire across the stage and country which is burning mementos, Meg describes it as "a fire in the snow. How could that be?" [5]. According to Boróka Prohaszkarad, this scene symbolically shows the women's resistance and their "apparent liberation from the grip of the violent males" [4]. This "fire in the snow," connotes "disbelief and contradiction rather than acceptance or reconciliation" and this conflicting image "serves to convolute the ending rather than resolve it" [33].

To put it concisely and in a postmodern frame work, the members of these two families have lost the sense of the real, because the society made them far away from reality by offering myths generated by the media; "myths that unlike those rooted more securely in the sensibly, are finally evidence of the fragmentation rather than gestures of resistance" [38]. Due to the loss of reality which is in Baudrillard's vision, one of the hallmarks of postmodernism, all family members have lost the true connection with life, though they feel the need to break the barriers and find their real place and self. They stay in nihilistic condition where "reality is inaccessible" [39]. Despite the fact that Shepard depicts unattainable resolution, "at the same time," he admits, "it was well worth the journey, trying to reestablish things" [18].

Besides, the closing moments of *A Lie of the Mind* – "the flickering flame and the perfectly folded flag – reflect our craving for order and reconciliation in our own lives" [18]. Actually, *A Lie*

of the Mind, displays “a psychic journey we all share in our private and collective journeys to link memory with meaning and ourselves with history” even we are not successful in the end [18]. Indeed, this play, offers no promising solution for the characters. They end up in hyperreal world while they think they succeed in making a change.

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